United Nations S/2001/245

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 March 2001

Original: English

Letter dated 19 March 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a letter dated 19 March 2001 from the President of Georgia, Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, regarding the United Nations-led peace process in Abkhazia, Georgia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Peter **Chkheidze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

01-29407 (E) 190301

Annex to the letter dated 19 March 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am sincerely happy to once again be provided with an opportunity to address this distinguished forum and would like to express my deep appreciation for the special friendship and support you have shown towards Georgia and her problems.

This meeting closely echoes the spirit of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, where the international community most emphatically stressed the dangers that unresolved conflicts pose to the global peace and security.

The Millennium Summit was a clear indication that the international community is willing and ready to undertake the task of protecting the world from violence on whatever grounds it may occur — ethnic, territorial or religious.

Monumental efforts notwithstanding, neither the number of conflicts nor that of the resulting casualties has decreased in the past decade.

It is largely owing to the "frozen conflicts" that the plight of millions of refugees and displaced persons remains deplorable. Year after year these desperate people continue to be pushed ever closer to abandoning the last threads of hope. Needless to say, this is a problem fraught with dire global consequences.

I cannot think of an alternative to empathizing with the personal tragedy of every individual and applying joint efforts to overcome the common challenges.

By now, however, I must note with deepest regret that despite the numerous Security Council resolutions, the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, remains extremely tense, with the problem still unresolved. The peace process is essentially deadlocked.

Unfortunately, backed by foreign reactionary forces, the Abkhaz regime continues to stubbornly flout the peace process, and blatantly demonstrates its rigid, uncompromising stance.

The results — tens of thousands of desperate people evicted from their native hearths, tired of vain expectations of returning home — are totally inconsistent with the spirit of the new millennium.

On our part, we believe that further efforts ought to be channelled in two basic directions: reaching an agreement on the political status of Abkhazia, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and the unconditional and dignified return of all refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes.

Regarding the first issue, we hold the view that the United Nations should draft a document setting forth the basic principles on distribution of constitutional competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi, and prior to its presentation to the sides, the Security Council should deliberate upon the document and grant its approval.

It is also desirable that the Security Council deliberations on Abkhazia, Georgia, as well as the subsequent resolution, should require the sides to overcome the current impasse and achieve tangible progress on this issue. We believe that the document on separation of constitutional competencies should become a basis for the further process of negotiations.

Present arduous conditions and the highly uncertain future of over 300,000 refugees and internally displaced persons require our decisive action to ensure the fulfilment by the current Abkhaz regime of its responsibilities, which primarily consist in securing unconditional return of the displaced persons to their rightful places of residence. Moreover, by no means can there be a linkage between the issue of the political status of Abkhazia, Georgia and the inalienable right of the refugees and the internally displaced to return to their homes.

We hope that the increased interest of the international community directed towards Georgian problems will enable us to utilize all the resources necessary to promote the peace process, and confidence-building measures retain a significant place among them.

The Yalta Summit which was held with the genuine, friendly support of the Ukrainian Government, as well as the results of the respective meetings in Greece and Turkey, shows that direct contacts, including those between representatives of different layers of society, have an enormous potential. In the implementation of the decisions reached, goodwill is of paramount importance and its manifestation should be encouraged and, in many cases, rigorously required.

I would like to extend my particular thanks to the Government of Ukraine for the successful organization of the Yalta Summit.

In conclusion, I remain hopeful that the United Nations Security Council will continue to be active and alert with respect to the difficult situation in Georgia. I avail myself of this opportunity to once again express to you my most sincere gratitude and respect.

(*Signed*) Edward **Shevardnadze**

19 March 2001